

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE REPORT NOVEMBER 2009

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) monthly report will provide an update on activities of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) ILRP. The information presented is from the Central Valley Water Board's October 7/8, 2009 Executive Officer's report. English and Spanish translations of current and past ILRP program monthly reports can be found on the State Water Boards Irrigated Agricultural Waiver Program website:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/agriculture/

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CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM

Long-term Program / Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

At the 19 May long-term ILRP Stakeholder Advisory Workgroup meeting, the Workgroup discussed a proposed range of long-term ILRP alternatives developed by participants and staff. Since the 19 May meeting, staff have refined the range of alternatives based on Workgroup comments received. As a result, there are now five distinct program alternatives that address both surface and groundwater discharges from irrigated agriculture (*Second Draft ILRP Alternatives*). On 6 August, staff circulated the 2nd Draft ILRP Alternatives to the Workgroup.

On 20 August staff conducted the final Advisory Workgroup meeting. The goals of the 20 August meeting were to 1) seek Workgroup consensus on the proposed scope, and "range" of the alternatives for further evaluation in an EIR and economics analysis and 2) seek Workgroup consensus on each of the proposed ILRP Goals and Objectives. At the 20 August meeting, Workgroup participants came to a unanimous consensus on the proposed range of alternatives. The Workgroup also came to consensus on most of the Goals and Objectives. Staff will be modifying two of the Goals and Objectives and circulate them to the Workgroup in an effort to get consensus on all of the Goals and Objectives.

Central Valley Water Board staff intends to discuss the proposed programmatic alternatives and the Workgroup process as part of an information item at the October Board meeting. The next steps involve beginning the draft EIR process. An economics analysis and staff policy analysis will also be conducted during the draft EIR process. Staff has committed to continue to engage stakeholders throughout the draft EIR process. The results of the draft EIR, economics, and policy analyses will be used to identify a staff recommended alternative from the range of alternatives. Staff intends to circulate the draft EIR and staff recommended alternative for public review in spring of 2010.

Postcards

Fresno office:

On 11 August, Central Valley Water Board staff issued 12 outreach postcards to potential owners or operators of irrigated agricultural land near Cross Creek in Kings County. The

postcards provide owners or operators who do not have regulatory coverage with an opportunity to submit an application for Water Board approval to join a Coalition group.

Sacramento office:

In July and August 2009, Central Valley Water Board staff issued 216 outreach postcards to potential owners of irrigated lands in the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition area. The July mail out targeted Yolo County, and the August mail out targeted Sacramento County's portion of the Sacramento- San Joaquin Legal Delta (Delta Pilot Project Area). The postcard recipients were identified using county tax assessor rolls and a federal agricultural land use database. The postcards advise owners of irrigated lands to obtain the proper regulatory coverage.

Enforcement**California Water Code section 13267 Orders****Fresno Office:**

On 17 August, the Executive Officer issued 16 CWC §13267 Orders to potential owners of irrigated lands near Byrd Slough on the Kings River. CWC §13267 Orders were issued to recipients of outreach postcards who failed to respond.

Sacramento Office:

In July 2009, the Executive Officer issued 155 CWC §13267 Orders to potential owners of irrigated lands in the Sacramento Valley and East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition areas. Most of the recipients of these Orders first received an outreach postcard. Those who received a postcard and did not respond subsequently received a 13267 Order.

Laboratory Audit

Staff sent the US EPA programmatic findings to the Coalition Group representatives on 16 July and will discuss the issues identified by US EPA at the next TIC meeting on 16 September.

Technical Issues Committee (TIC)

The next TIC meeting is scheduled for 16 September. Staff will provide an update on the work done and topics discussed by the Laboratory Round Table Focus Group, including the standardization of algae toxicity methods, sample collection for low-flow or no-flow conditions, EPA's recommendations to clarify the toxicity procedures in the Coalition monitoring and reporting program, and field quality control requirements.

Management Plan Focus Group

The next Management Plan Focus Group meeting is scheduled for 16 September. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an update on the Management Plan Focus Group progress regarding the water quality trigger limits (WQTLs) analysis and discuss challenges related to management plan implementation. Agenda topics include brief updates from the Coalition representatives on the status of management plan implementation and analysis; discussion of diuron toxicity data references; and proposed potential WQTLs.

Coalition Groups**California Rice Commission (CRC)**

On 1 July, Central Valley Water Board staff received the CRC's Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) as required by MRP Order R5-2009-0809. The QAPP covers monitoring that will be collected under the Rice Pesticide Program (RPP), the ILRP conditional waiver, and the Algae Toxicity Management Plan.

The CRC submitted monitoring results to date for its core and assessment sites under the ILRP. This year's monitoring data will be used to determine a multi-year Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) under the ILRP.

East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (ESJWQC)

On 1 September, the ESJWQC submitted the September quarterly monitoring data report to the Central Valley Water Board.

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for 3 November. However, staff is arranging to meet with the Coalition before the next quarterly meeting in order to obtain clarification on the management plan schedules, and to potentially revise the current proposed time frames (as per Coalition request on 5 June).

Goose Lake Coalition

On 31 August, Regional Board staff in Redding received the Goose Lake Coalition's Quarterly Monitoring Report, covering the period of 1 April through 30 June 2009. The report did not identify exceedances of any applicable water quality standards. The Goose Lake Coalition is planning a quarterly meeting scheduled for early October. Staff is planning on attending this meeting.

Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC)

On 8 July, staff participated in a Sacramento-Amador Subwatershed field tour provided for Water Board and NCWA staff. The tour group included subwatershed coordinator Becky Waegell, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner Debbie Johnson, NRCS representative Dan Tavernor, NCWA coordinator Bruce Houdesheldt, LWA consultant Claus Suverkropp, and former NCWA coordinator Tina Lunt. Grower member Ken Pucci met the participants in the Delta to describe the crops, management practices, and irrigation methods in the area.

On 16 July, staff participated in a Placer-Nevada-South Sutter-North Sacramento (PNSSNS) Subwatershed field tour provided for Water Board and NCWA staff. The tour was organized and led by subwatershed coordinators Tom Aguilar, Linda Watanabee, and Bonnie Ferreira. Participants included Bruce Houdesheldt (NCWA), Lesa Osterholm and Jan Blake (Nevada County RCD), Steve Scheer (Sutter County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner), Josh Huntsinger (Placer County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner), Jeff Pylman (Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner), and Ed Sills. Grower member Frank Correia hosted a visit of his cattle ranching operations and described his irrigation recirculation and grazing rotation systems. PNSSNS President and grower member Tom Aguilar hosted a visit at his family's Mandarin Hill Orchards near Penryn. Tom described the irrigation methods and culture of the mandarin orchards.

On 22 July, 6 August, and 18 August staff held meetings with SVWQC representatives to discuss development of the Coalition-specific MRP Order, including a modified approach to selection of monitoring parameters, preparation of supporting documentation, and conditions for an optional Pilot Watershed Management Practices Plan for up to three subwatershed areas. A full draft MRP Order is planned for early October, with finalization expected no later than December.

On 18 August, staff held a meeting with the Coalition to discuss additional comments for the SVWQC Draft Management Plan Addendum submitted on 15 July, which describes how the Coalition's program addresses TMDLs in the Sacramento River Watershed and Delta. SVWQC will be addressing all staff comments and submitting a Final Management Plan Addendum for Executive Officer approval.

San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition (SJCDWQC)

On 3 August the Coalition submitted a request to update its Management Plan schedules because the Proposition 50 grant that funded the Coalition's outreach was suspended in December. The request is under review.

On 5 August staff held the third quarterly meeting with the Coalition to discuss progress of implementing the Management Plan. The Coalition provided statistics regarding its performance goals and measures. The next meeting is scheduled for November.

On 18 August staff met with the SJCDWQC and the East San Joaquin Quality Coalition consultant to discuss the current Management Plan's strategy progress and potential revisions.

On 1 September the Coalition submitted its Quarterly Monitoring Data Report for the monitoring period of April through June, as required by Order No. R5-2006-0053. After review, these data will be posted on the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program web site.

Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition (SSJVWQC)

On 5 August, Pamela Creedon and Clay Rodgers met with Dave Orth of the SSJVWQC to discuss progress in addressing comments to the Coalition's Monitoring and Reporting Program Plan and grower participation with the Coalition.

On 12 August, Central Valley Water Board staff met with representatives of the Kern subwatershed to discuss a sampling location south of Bakersfield.

On 2 September, Central Valley Water Board staff met with representatives of the SSJVWQC to advise the Coalition of management plan requirements.

On 3 September, Central Valley Water Board staff met with representatives of the Kaweah subbasin to discuss sampling west of the City of Visalia.

Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition (WSJRWQ)

On 18 August, staff conducted a conference call with Chris Linneman of the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition to discuss staff comments on the Semi-Annual Monitoring Report for 2008/2009 Non-Irrigation Season. Chris Linneman agreed to update the report with staff comments and submit a revised report to staff prior to 15 September.

Data Management

Staff continues to work closely with the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) in synch with the SWAMP work plan as it relates to the Region 5 SWAMP/CEDEN Data Node. Portions of the SWAMP workplan include the limited continued support and tool development for ILRP SWAMP comparability. An ILRP specific web-based SWAMP format checking tool is currently in development and slated to be ready for use very soon. This tool will streamline data transfer from coalitions to Central Valley Water Board staff as well as provide feedback on the format and business rules of SWAMP compatibility for electronic data submittals. Both programs are reaching out to the Water Board Training Academy to potentially aid in the training of coalition groups for use of this tool once it is made available.

Remaining funds earmarked for the Region 5 Data SWAMP Node have been directed to be used to assist the entry, formatting, and loading of the ILRP's historical datasets from 2004-2007. This assistance will support the continued efforts by the ILRP staff to upload older datasets concurrently with new datasets submitted by Stakeholders throughout the year. Oversight of the use of these funds and progress by the Region 5 SWAMP Node will be coordinated between the ILRP staff and the San Joaquin Watershed SWAMP unit.

The ILRP Participant Monitoring Data web site currently has data available up to 2007 for the large coalitions and up to 2008 for all Irrigation Districts and the CRC. The next major update is planned to occur in September and will add water data from 2008 through early 2009 for all Coalitions and Irrigation Districts that have submitted monitoring reports through 31 August.

2009. Smaller updates are expected to occur throughout the year to add data that is submitted after that date through annual Monitoring Reports and quarterly data submittals.

The schedule for the release of the Proposition 50 funds targeted for the SWAMP QA team still remains unclear at this time. The intent of these funds was for the SWAMP QA team to meet with coalitions and assist with laboratory contracts and data quality assurance measures. The Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition made a request for this assistance and a tentative meeting was scheduled for 29 January 2009 and subsequently postponed when those funds were frozen by the Department of Finance. This meeting will be rescheduled as soon as those funds are made available.

MOU Pilot Program

The extension and amendment for the Butte County Agricultural Commissioner has been executed. The contract modifications for the Glenn County Agricultural Commissioner are expected to be executed by the end of September. The changes will extend the contracts to 30 June 2010. A work plan for 2009-2010 is being written.